

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF AUDIO RECORDINGS OF
GIUSEPPE VERDI'S OVERTURE TO *LA FORZA DEL DESTINO*

A CREATIVE PROJECT

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF MUSIC

BY

CHARLES STEWART

DOUGLAS DROSTE - ADVISOR

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

MUNCIE, IN

MAY 2015

A Comparative Analysis of Audio Recordings of
Giuseppe Verdi's Overture to *La forza del destino*

Giuseppe Verdi's opera *La forza del destino* was premiered in St. Petersburg, Russia, on November 10, 1862.¹ In 1868, Verdi agreed to a new production of the opera at La Scala Opera House in Milan. For this production, he replaced the original preludio with a full-scale overture that is comprised of some of the most memorable tunes.² Since its initial performance, the overture has become extremely popular as a stand-alone concert piece. Many famous conductors have recorded this overture. The following paper will explore four specific recordings by prestigious conductors and orchestras. The four recordings that have been analyzed are of Arturo Toscanini conducting the NBC Symphony Orchestra (1949), Herbert von Karajan conducting the Berlin Philharmonic (1975), Riccardo Muti conducting the Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala (1995), and James Levine conducting the London Symphony Orchestra (1977). In addition to the audio recordings, a video recording of a production from La Scala in 1978 with conductor Giuseppe Patané was used to determine if the overture is performed any differently as part of the opera. Additionally, the video recording was used to determine where the different themes in the overture came from in the opera.

In order to simplify the discussion of the various recordings, I have divided the overture into sixteen different sections. The sections are based on a division of the major themes or where tempo changes occur. Section one is comprised of measures 1 through 8. The tempo marking is

¹ Roger Parker, "Verdi, Giuseppe," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/29191>, accessed December 1, 2014.

² Roger Parker, "Forza del Destino, La," *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera, Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O007261>, accessed December 1, 2014.

“Allegro.” Here, the brass and bassoons play three half notes of the note E. The three notes are then repeated. These three notes are used to signify fate or, more accurately, destiny.

Example 1: Overture to *La forza del destino*, mm. 1-8

The musical score is for measures 1-8 of the Overture to *La forza del destino*. It is written for a full orchestra, including Fagotti, Corni, Trombe, Tromboni, Cimbasso, and Contrabbassi. The tempo is marked "Allegro". The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score shows the first eight measures of the piece. In measures 1-3, the brass and bassoon parts play a half-note E. This motif is then repeated in measures 4-8. The string parts are not shown in this excerpt.

Section two is comprised of measures 9 through 42. The tempo in this section is marked “Allegro agitato e presto.” This section is comprised of a sixteenth-note string motive. This motive continues to come back throughout the overture, often as an ostinato.

Example 2: Overture to *La forza del destino*, mm. 9-14

The image shows a musical score for measures 9-14 of the Overture to *La forza del destino*. The tempo is marked "Allegro agitato e presto". The score includes parts for Clarinet (Cl.), Flute (Fl.), Trumpet (Trbn.), Violin (Vni), Viola (Vle), Violoncello (Vcl.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The music is in 2/4 time and features a driving, rhythmic pattern with dynamic markings of *pp* and *p*.

Section three is set as measures 43 through 50. This section is a direct restatement of section one. The tempo is marked as "I. Tempo."

Section four is comprised of measures 51 through 67. The tempo marking for this section is "Andantino." This section is characterized by the flute, oboe, and clarinet unison lyrical melody with interjections from the first violins playing the sixteenth-note motive from section two. The music in this section is derived from the duet sung by Don Carlo and Don Álvaro in the last act of the opera. This duet leads to the characters' final duel, "Col sangue sol cancellasi."

Example 3: Overture to *La forza del destino*, mm. 47-54

B
Andantino

5

The musical score is presented in two systems. The top system contains staves for the following instruments: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet in B-flat (Cl. La), Bassoon (Fg.), Violin (Mi), Horn (Cor. Do), Trumpet (Trb. Mi), Trombone (Trbn.), and Cymbals (Cmbs.). The bottom system contains staves for Violin (Vni), Viola (Vle), and Voice (Vo.). The tempo is marked 'Andantino'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score shows a melodic motif in octaves for the violins, with interruptions from the low strings and winds of a sixteenth-note motive. The section begins with an eight-measure lyrical melodic motive in octaves played by the violins, with interruptions in the fourth measure and eighth measure from the low strings and winds of the sixteenth-note motive. Starting in measure 76, or the ninth bar of the section, more instruments begin to join the melodic motive with the low strings and winds now playing the sixteenth-note motive as an ostinato. This section remains piano until the last three measures where it grows to forte at the end.

Section five takes place from measure 68 through 82. This section begins with an eight-measure lyrical melodic motive in octaves played by the violins, with interruptions in the fourth measure and eighth measure from the low strings and winds of the sixteenth-note motive. Starting in measure 76, or the ninth bar of the section, more instruments begin to join the melodic motive with the low strings and winds now playing the sixteenth-note motive as an ostinato. This section remains piano until the last three measures where it grows to forte at the

downbeat of section six. The quarter-note theme in this section is derived from Leonora's aria in the second act where she is praying to find peace.

Example 4: Overture to *La forza del destino*, mm. 68-73

The image shows a musical score for measures 68-73 of the Overture to *La forza del destino*. The score is for four instruments: Flute (Fg.), Violin (Vni.), Viola (Vle.), and Cello (Ve.). The tempo is marked "Andante mosso" and the time signature is common time (C). The key signature has one sharp (F#). The Flute part (Fg.) begins with a rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) and a quarter note (C5), marked with a *pp* dynamic. The Violin part (Vni.) plays a melodic line with slurs and accents, marked with *ppp con espress.* and *ARCO*. The Viola part (Vle.) plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, marked with *ppp* and *ARCO*. The Cello part (Ve.) begins with a rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes (G2, A2, B2) and a quarter note (C3), marked with a *pp* dynamic. The score is written on four staves, with the Flute staff at the top and the Cello staff at the bottom.

Section five leads into section six without pause. The next section is comprised of measures 83 through 114. The tempo of this section is marked "Presto come prima." The theme of this section is the sixteenth-note theme from section two. The opening dynamic of the section is forte and at measure 95 the dynamic raises to fortissimo. The energy of this section is maintained from the beginning to the end.

Example 5: Overture to *La forza del destino*, mm. 83-88

10

Presto come prima
D

Ott.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
Fg.
Mi
Cor.
Do
Trb.
Trbn.
Cmbs.
Re-Sol
Tp.

Presto come prima
D

Vni
Vle
Vc.
Cb.

Section seven begins at measure 115 and continues through 121. “Andante come prima” is the tempo marking of this section. The main theme is the lyrical theme played by the flute, oboe, and clarinet in section four. However, this time, each instrument states one measure of the theme at separate times. The clarinet begins, followed by the oboe, and then concluding with the flute, which plays the theme with a *poco allargando*. This section, dynamically set at *piano dolce*, seems to be a true reflection or remembrance of section four.

Example 6: Overture to *La forza del destino*, mm. 115-121

The musical score for measures 115-121 of the Overture to *La forza del destino* is presented in two systems. The first system includes the Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), and Clarinet (Cl.) parts. The second system includes the Violin (Vni), Viola (Vle), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.) parts. The tempo is marked "Andante come prima" and the dynamics are "p dolce" and "poco allarg.". The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score shows the instruments playing a lyrical theme in a staggered fashion, with the clarinet starting, followed by the oboe, and then the flute. The string section provides harmonic support with pizzicato (PIZZ.) and piano (p) dynamics.

Section eight is measure 122 through 140. The tempo here is marked as “Allegro brillante.” The primary voice in this section is a lyrical clarinet solo accompanied by two harps playing triplets underneath, as well as celli emphasizing the chord changes. In measure 130 of this section, the flute and bassoon join in to support the clarinet melody. A few measures later,

the horns also join. This section leads straight into section nine. The clarinet melody in this section is derived from the duet “Se voi scacciate questa pentita,” which is sung between Leonora and Padre Guariano. Material from this duet continues throughout the next two sections.

Example 7: Overture to *La forza del destino*, mm. 122-124

The musical score for measures 122-124 of the Overture to *La forza del destino* is presented for four staves. The top staff is for the Clarinet (Cl.), marked with a first ending bracket and a 'p' dynamic marking. The second staff is for the First Violin (A. I.), the third for the Second Violin (A. II.), and the fourth for the Viola (Ve.). The tempo is 'Allegro brillante' and the key signature is G major. The Violin and Viola parts feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests. The Viola part has a 'p' dynamic marking.

Section nine takes place from measure 141 through 165. This section is characterized by a sixteenth-note melody in the strings with a fanfare-style response in the brass. In measure 147, the seventh measure of this section, the first and second violins have a semi-contrapuntal melody, with the viola, cello, and bass playing eighth-note scales underneath. At measure 151, the brass section joins in leading the section to a strong finish, transitioning immediately to section ten.

Example 8: Overture to *La forza del destino*, mm. 141-144

[illegible]

Section ten is comprised of measure 166 through 179. This section contains a reverent brass chorale. At the end of each phrase, the strings interrupt the chorale with furious sixteenth notes. In this section, which still derives its material from Leonora's and Padre Guardiano's duet, the brass chorale is meant to represent a Padre Guardiano reciting a prayer, where the string interruptions are to represent the Leonora's plea.

Example 9: Overture to *La forza del destino*, mm. 166-172

22

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

51

52

53

54

55

56

57

58

59

60

61

62

63

64

65

66

67

68

69

70

71

72

73

74

75

76

77

78

79

80

81

82

83

84

85

86

87

88

89

90

91

92

93

94

95

96

97

98

99

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

126

127

128

129

130

131

132

133

134

135

136

137

138

139

140

141

142

143

144

145

146

147

148

149

150

151

152

153

154

155

156

157

158

159

160

161

162

163

164

165

166

167

168

169

170

171

172

173

174

175

176

177

178

179

180

181

182

183

184

185

186

187

188

189

190

191

192

193

194

195

196

197

198

199

200

201

202

203

204

205

206

207

208

209

210

211

212

213

214

215

216

217

218

219

220

221

222

223

224

225

226

227

228

229

230

231

232

233

234

235

236

237

238

239

240

241

242

243

244

245

246

247

248

249

250

251

252

253

254

255

256

257

258

259

260

261

262

263

264

265

266

267

268

269

270

271

272

273

274

275

276

277

278

279

280

281

282

283

284

285

286

287

288

289

290

291

292

293

294

295

296

297

298

299

300

301

302

303

304

305

306

307

308

309

310

311

312

313

314

315

316

317

318

319

320

321

322

323

324

325

326

327

328

329

330

331

332

333

334

335

336

337

338

339

340

341

342

343

344

345

346

347

348

349

350

351

352

353

354

355

356

357

358

359

360

361

362

363

364

365

366

367

368

369

370

371

372

373

374

375

376

377

378

379

380

381

382

383

384

385

386

387

388

389

390

391

392

393

394

395

396

397

398

399

400

401

402

403

404

405

406

407

408

409

410

411

412

413

414

415

416

417

418

419

420

421

422

423

424

425

426

427

428

429

430

431

432

433

434

435

436

437

438

439

440

441

442

443

444

445

446

447

448

449

450

451

452

453

454

455

456

457

458

459

460

461

462

463

464

465

466

467

468

469

470

471

472

473

474

475

476

477

478

479

480

481

482

483

484

485

486

487

488

489

490

491

492

493

494

495

496

497

498

499

500

501

502

503

504

505

506

507

508

509

510

511

512

513

514

515

516

517

518

519

520

521

522

523

524

525

526

527

528

529

530

531

532

533

534

535

536

537

538

539

540

541

542

543

544

545

546

547

548

549

550

551

552

553

554

555

556

557

558

559

560

561

562

563

564

565

566

567

568

569

570

571

572

573

574

575

576

577

578

579

580

581

582

583

584

585

586

587

588

589

590

591

592

593

594

595

596

597

598

599

600

601

602

603

604

605

606

607

608

609

610

611

612

613

614

615

616

617

618

619

620

621

622

623

624

625

626

627

628

629

630

631

632

633

634

635

636

637

638

639

640

641

642

643

644

645

646

647

648

649

650

651

652

653

654

655

656

657

658

659

660

661

662

663

664

665

666

667

668

669

670

671

672

673

674

675

676

677

678

679

680

681

682

683

684

685

686

687

688

689

690

691

692

693

694

695

696

697

698

699

700

701

702

703

704

705

706

707

708

709

710

711

712

713

714

715

716

717

718

719

720

721

722

723

724

725

726

727

728

729

730

731

732

733

734

735

736

737

738

739

740

741

742

743

744

745

746

747

748

749

750

751

752

753

754

755

756

757

758

759

760

761

762

763

764

765

766

767

768

769

770

771

772

773

774

775

776

777

778

779

780

781

782

783

784

785

786

787

788

789

790

791

792

793

794

795

796

797

798

799

800

801

802

803

804

805

806

807

808

809

810

811

812

813

814

815

816

817

818

819

820

821

822

823

824

825

826

827

828

829

830

831

832

833

834

835

836

837

838

839

840

841

842

843

844

845

846

847

848

849

850

851

852

853

854

855

856

857

858

859

860

861

862

863

864

865

866

867

868

869

870

871

872

873

874

875

876

877

878

879

880

881

882

883

884

885

886

887

888

889

890

891

892

893

894

895

896

897

898

899

900

901

902

903

904

905

906

907

908

909

910

911

912

913

914

915

916

917

918

919

920

921

922

923

924

925

926

927

928

929

930

931

932

933

934

935

936

937

938

939

940

941

942

943

944

945

946

947

948

949

950

951

952

953

954

955

956

957

958

959

960

961

962

963

964

965

966

967

968

969

970

971

972

973

974

975

976

977

978

979

980

981

982

983

984

985

986

987

988

989

990

991

992

993

994

995

996

997

998

999

1000

Section eleven begins at measure 180 and proceeds through measure 197. Here the dynamic drops to pianissimo. This section is characterized by the sixteenth-note theme from section two. Here, however, the theme is repeated. More voices join in measure 189 with a massive three-measure crescendo to forte in 192, where the dynamic remains until the end of the section.

Example 10: Overture to *La forza del destino*, mm. 164-172

The musical score is for the Overture to *La forza del destino*, measures 164-172. It is in D major (two sharps) and 2/4 time. The tempo is marked 'L' (Lento). The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fg.), Violin (Vi), Viola (Vle), Cello (Cb.), and Double Bass (Db.). The second system includes parts for Violin (Vni), Viola (Vle), Cello (Cb.), and Double Bass (Db.). Dynamics include f (forte), p (piano), and pp (pianissimo). The score shows a complex orchestration with many notes and rests.

Section twelve is from measure 198 through 203. The tempo indication here is “ritard grandioso.” The texture involves a soaring melody in the upper woodwinds and trumpets, with sustained chords supported by the rest of the orchestra. This is a major climax of the overture. Verdi signifies the importance of this section by adding the crash cymbal. This is the first time it is used in the piece.

Example 11: Overture to *La forza del destino*, mm. 195-200

The image displays a musical score for measures 195 through 200 of the Overture to *La forza del destino*. The score is written for a full orchestra and includes a crash cymbal. The tempo indication is "rit. grandioso" (ritardando grandioso), which appears above the staff for the Oboe and Flute parts. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes staves for Oboe (Ob.), Flute (Fl.), Bassoon (Bs.), Clarinet in E-flat (Cl. Eb), Bassoon in F (Bs. F), Horn in F (Hr. F), Trumpet in F (Trb. F), Trombone in F (Trbn. F), Cymbal (Cymb.), Trumpet in C (Tp.), and Gong (G. C.). The second system includes staves for Violin (Viol.), Viola (Vio.), Violoncello (Vcl.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The score features a soaring melody in the upper woodwinds and trumpets, with sustained chords supported by the rest of the orchestra. The crash cymbal is used for the first time in the piece. The score is marked with "ff" (fortissimo) and "rit. grandioso".

Example 12: Overture to *La forza del destino*, mm. 201-205

13

Section fourteen takes place from measure 223 through 230. This section is fortissimo and is characterized by the brass entering with a new theme. Underneath the brass, the low strings and low woodwinds continue with the sixteenth ostinato.

Example 13: Overture to *La forza del destino*, mm. 222-226

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system includes parts for Oboe (Ott.), Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Trumpet (Trb.), Trombone (Tbn.), Tuba (Tub.), Snare Drum (Tp.), and Cymbal (G.C.). The second system includes parts for Violin I (A.I.), Violin II (A.II.), Violin (Viol.), Viola (Vio.), and Cello (Cb.). The score is marked with '83' in the top right corner. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 4/4. The score shows a fortissimo section starting at measure 222, with a new brass theme entering. The woodwinds and low strings continue with a sixteenth-note ostinato.

Section fifteen happens in measure 231 through 238. This section has a similar feel to section thirteen, but instead of triplets, the melody is in sixteenth notes. In support of the sixteenth notes, the winds are playing lyrical quarter notes.

Example 14: Overture to *La forza del destino*, mm. 231-233

The image shows a musical score for measures 231-233 of the Overture to *La forza del destino*. The score is for measures 231, 232, and 233. It features woodwinds (Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon, Cor Anglais) and strings (Violins, Violas, Cellos, Double Basses). The woodwinds play lyrical quarter notes, while the strings play sixteenth notes. The score is marked with a 'P' (Piano) dynamic and a '35' measure marker.

Section sixteen, the final section of the piece, takes place from measure 239 through 261. The tempo marking at the beginning of this section is “Piu animato.” The main theme of this section is similar to that introduced in section fourteen. The section is characterized by loud, syncopated chords. With the exception of two places, measure 243 and 252, where the music drops to softer dynamics suddenly this final section remains loud to the very end.

Example 15: Overture to *La forza del destino*, mm. 237-240

38

Più animato

Ott.
Fl.
Ob.
Cl.
La
Fg.
Mi
Cor.
Mi
Trb.
Mi
Trbn.
Cmbs.
Tp.
G.C.

Più animato

Vni
Vle
Vc.
Cb.

The primary interpretive element that I explored was tempo. I listened to each recording multiple times with a metronome. I used the “tap” feature on my metronome to determine the tempi that each conductor used throughout each section. Once I discovered this information, I compiled the chart below.

	Toscanini	Karajan	Muti	Levine	Patané
Section 1 mm. 1 - 8	♩ = 120	♩ = 70	♩ = 126	♩ = 118	♩ = 110
Section 2 mm. 9 - 24	♩. = 96	♩. = 80	♩. = 88	♩. = 90	♩. = 81
Section 3 mm. 43 - 50	♩ = 120	♩ = 70	♩ = 119	♩ = 120	♩ = 98
Section 4 mm. 51 - 67	♩ = 86, rubato rit. (66)	♩ = 75, slight rubato	♩ = 80, ww rubato, strict vln	♩ = 86	♩ = 74, rubato
Section 5 mm. 68 - 82	♩ = 70 (68-74) ♩ = 64 (75-82) rit. (82)	♩ = 50 (68-74) ♩ = 56 (75-82) rit. (82)	♩ = 60, molto rubato (68-74) ♩ = 70 (68-74) rit. (82)	♩ = 60, rubato (68-74) ♩ = 62 (75-82) rit. (82)	♩ = 56, molto rubato (68-74) ♩ = 60 (75-82) rit. (82)
Section 6 mm. 83 - 114	♩. = 92	♩. = 94	♩. = 96	♩. = 94	♩. = 82
Section 7 mm. 115 - 121	♩ = 79	♩ = 74	♩ = 58, molto rubato	♩ = 60	♩ = 69
Section 8 mm. 122 - 140	♩ = 148	♩ = 133, poco rubato	♩ = 136	♩ = 138	♩ = 146
Section 9 mm. 141 - 165	♩ = 148	♩ = 136 molto dim. (165)	♩ = 132 (141-150) ♩ = 141 (151-165) rit. (164-165)	♩ = 141	♩ = 143
Section 10 mm. 166 - 179	♩ = 132	♩ = 121	♩ = 132	♩ = 127	♩ = 133
Section 11 mm. 180 - 197	♩ = 155 (180-191) accel. (192-195)	♩ = 143	♩ = 148	♩ = 147	♩ = 144
Section 12 mm. 198 - 203	♩ = 90 (198-201) ♩ = 155 (202)	♩ = 100 (198-201) ♩ = 138 (202-203)	♩ = 85 (198-201) ♩ = 144 (202-203)	♩ = 79 (198-201) ♩ = 177 (202-203)	♩ = 93 (198-201) ♩ = 144 (202-203)
Section 13 mm. 204 - 222	♩ = 173	♩ = 150	♩ = 150	♩ = 164	♩ = 150
Section 14 mm. 223 - 230	♩ = 173	♩ = 156	♩ = 165	♩ = 160	♩ = 150
Section 15 mm. 231 - 238	♩ = 167	♩ = 156	♩ = 155	♩ = 160	♩ = 150
Section 16 mm. 239 - 261	♩ = 182	♩ = 156	♩ = 160	♩ = 177	♩ = 153

After the information was compiled, I compared how each conductor interpreted each section. In section one, all of the conductors went about the same tempo except Karajan. Karajan took the opening chords only about half as fast as the other conductors. This slow tempo sets a different mood for the entire piece. It possibly provides a stronger feeling of fate, but the slower tempo causes the chords to lose some of the power of the opening. Section three mirrored section one in all of the recordings. Each conductor set approximately the same tempo in section four, but their level of rubato varied. Levine used no rubato, Karajan only used a little bit of rubato, and Patané a little more. Muti used quite a bit of rubato during the woodwind melody, but kept the violin entrances in strict time. Toscanini allowed the tempo to push and pull the most compared to other recordings. The issue of rubato carried over into section five. Toscanini and Karajan added no vibrato, while Levine added some and Muti and Patané used molto vibrato. In general, the conductors either stayed the same tempo or sped up slightly at measure 75. However, Toscanini slowed down at measure 75. Everyone added a ritard at measure 82, where one is not marked. All the conductors, with the exception of Patané, went about the same tempo in section six. Patané went 10 bpm slower than the slowest of the other four. When listening to the recordings simultaneously, this tempo variance is easily heard, but does not effect the overall feeling of the piece. In section seven, the tempi cover a wide range. Muti conducts the slowest tempo with the eighth note equaling 58 bpm, and the variance among the conductors increases to Toscanini conducting the eighth note at 79 bpm. It should also be observed that both of these men are prominent Italian conductors, making the tempo variation interesting. One might think Italians, for whom Verdi is a national figure, would have a similar interpretation of the piece. Section seven proves this to be untrue. Again in section eight, all of the conductors select about the same tempo. Karajan, however, allows for some rubato throughout this section. Allowing for

rubato is difficult here because the harp has constant eighth-note triplets throughout this section. The only variation that is important to note in section nine is the *molto diminuendo* that Karajan adds in measure 165. This is contrary to what is printed in the part; Verdi indicates a *crescendo* throughout this section. The only difference that should be noted in section eleven is that Toscanini adds an *accelerando* starting in measure 192 that leads to the *molto ritard* in measure 198. This *accelerando* causes a more abrupt *ritard* when it appears. An important interpretive tradition that each conductor added was the *subito piu mosso* in measures 202 and 203. From sections thirteen through fifteen, all of the tempi are relatively similar and constant. Section sixteen is where the *piu mosso* is printed. Most conductors only go a little bit faster, but Toscanini increases his tempo drastically. This came as quite a shock to me as I listened to the recording.

My interpretive choices for this piece were primarily based on three factors. The first factor was that I wanted to find smooth tempo transitions from section to another. The second factor that determined my interpretation was the ability of the orchestra. I could only take certain sections at certain tempi because of how fast the string section could play. Finally, I consulted the recordings discussed in order to determine what, if anything, is traditionally done and to determine if any inspiration could be obtained from the decisions made by the master conductors.

I set my tempo for section one so that the quarter note equaled 120 bpm. My interpretive goal for this section was for it to sound like destiny was knocking on a door. I decided that this tempo allowed for this effect to truly come through in the interpretation. Also, this is approximately the tempo in all of the recordings, except for the Karajan recording. In section two, my tempo was dotted quarter note equals 69 bpm. This tempo is slower than I would truly

want to go, but the technical ability of the orchestra dictated that tempo. However, 69 bpm is still an effective tempo because it still encourages the forward drive that is necessary in this section. I interpreted section three as being exactly like section one; therefore, I set the tempo to equal 120 bpm. My interpretation of section four required a slower tempo: the eighth note now equals 72 bpm. My goal in this section was to add some slight rubato and lift at the end of each woodwind line. The Muti recording influenced my choice for rubato here. Adding rubato allows for a more singing quality to the section, not unlike how the soloist would perform the corresponding aria later in the opera. Section five was established as quarter note equaling 50 bpm. When the ostinato begins in measure 75, I quickened the tempo so that the quarter note equals 60 bpm. The Muti recording, once again, effected my decision to start one tempo and then speed up at measure 75. The tempo I chose for section six is the dotted quarter note equaling 94 bpm. The majority of the recordings reflected this tempo, so it seemed to be the “traditional” tempo of the section. In section seven, I began the clarinet statement at the tempo from section four, which is eighth note equaling 72 bpm, but I then immediately began to slow the tempo down. This interpretation allows for a feeling of relaxation after the intensity of section six. It also allows this section to seem like a true reflection of section four. The Muti and Levine recordings had an effect on my interpretive choice here. Their recordings have the reflective quality I was trying to achieve. The tempo I chose for section eight was quarter note equals 138 bpm. This tempo allowed the clarinet to comfortably play the lyrical melody. Although some of the recordings allowed for rubato in this section, I insisted we keep strict time. Due to the harp’s triplet ostinato underneath the solo, rubato would make this section extremely difficult. By the time section nine begins, the tempo of my performance had dropped off slightly to the quarter note equaling 132 bpm. The brass chorale at section ten slows again to the quarter note equaling 121 bpm. I

interpreted this section a little slower because of the prayerfulness it represents. Additionally, all of the recordings studied slow slightly in this section, leading me to believe it is tradition. However, in section eleven I resumed the faster tempo, increasing it to the quarter note at 135 bpm. In my interpretation of this piece, I began to ritard in measure 196, so that measure 197 is at a tempo where the quarter note equals 120 bpm. There were two reasons for this interpretive choice. First, slowing down here smoothly set up section twelve. Second, because of the ability level of some of the violins, slowing down allowed them to feel more comfortable with the descending sixteenth notes. In section twelve, my tempo began with the quarter note equaling 114 bpm. At measure 202, I sped up so that the quarter note now equalled 154 bpm. As is evident by the recordings studied here, this subito tempo change at measure 202 is a tradition that influenced my interpretation. In section thirteen, the fastest I allowed was the quarter note at 144 bpm. This interpretive choice was based on the technique of the section. The triplet motive that the violins have is very challenging and in order to make the section more obtainable, I did not go too fast. With the exception of Toscanini, none of the recordings went much faster than this tempo. I attempted to keep the tempo constant with the quarter note equaling 144 bpm throughout sections fourteen and fifteen. The tempo slightly fluctuated, but overall it stayed consistent. At section sixteen, I decided to pick the tempo up to where the quarter note equals 153 bpm. With the exception of a slight push at the end, this tempo was constant throughout the last section.

Audio and video recordings are extremely valuable tools for a young conductor learning a piece for the first time. Especially in the genre of opera, there are many traditions that are done that are not printed in the score. Because of this, one must learn by listening to previous interpreters. Although they are an important tool, recordings must be used appropriately. One

should be conscious of listening to a recording too much because then the individual's interpretation will most likely be extremely similar as said recording. In this case presented here, I found that by studying these recordings, I was able to have a better grasp on the traditions of Verdi's operas and overtures. Although I did consult recordings before conducting Giuseppe Verdi's Overture to *La forza del destino*, I can confidently say that the performance I presented was uniquely my own.

Bibliography

- Karajan, Herbert von. *Herbert von Karajan: Famous Overtures*. Performed by Herbert von Karajan and Berlin Philharmonic. 1975. Deutsche Grammophon, 2003. CD.
- Parker, Roger. "Forza del destino, La." *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed December 1, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O007261>.
- Parker, Roger. "Verdi, Giuseppe." *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed December 1, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/29191>.
- Rossini, Gioachino and Giuseppe Verdi. *Toscanini Edition: Rossini: Il Barbiere Di Siviglia & La Cenerentola - Verdi: La Traviata & La Forza del Destino*. Performed by NBC Symphony Orchestra and Arturo Toscanini. 1949. Grammofofono, 2009. CD.
- Verdi, Giuseppe. *La forza del destino: dramma lirico in quattro atti*. Performed by Giuseppe Pantene and Orchestra and Chorus of Teatro alla Scala. 1978. Milan: Hardy Classic Video, 2011. DVD.
- Verdi, Giuseppe. *Verdi: Favorite Overtures*. Milan: Ricordi, 2002.
- Verdi, Giuseppe. *Verdi: La forza del destino - The Sony Opera House*. Performed by James Levine & London Symphony Orchestra. 1977. Sony Music Entertainment, 1977. CD.
- Verdi, Giuseppe. *Verdi: Overtures and Preludes*. Performed by Riccardo Muti and Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala. 1995. Sony Classical, 2001. CD.